



# The Honourable Claudette Tardif

## Senator for Alberta

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Dear Friends,

Since Parliament reopened on January 27, 2009, I have focused on important issues relating to the current economic uncertainty. Canada is going through a recession that is affecting all Canadians. Let us hope that the new measures taken will stimulate economic growth in order to prevent further layoffs and bankruptcies. I will be monitoring this situation closely.

In the Senate, I have questioned the government a number of times about the underfunding of university research, its weakened commitment to official language minority communities and its lack of support for CBC/Radio-Canada.

This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the enactment of the *Official Languages Act*. I truly hope the government will show stronger leadership on the implementation of the Act.

I had the honour of representing the Senate of Canada in Paris at the launch of "France-Canada-Québec : 400 ans de relations d'exception," a book coordinated by Senator Joyal. This book, which explores the relationship between Canada and France since the exploration and colonization of North America, was very well received.

I would like to congratulate Amanda Simard, The Honourable Claudette Tardif, PhD from La Cité collégiale, who has joined our team Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition on a temporary basis and will return to the Senate in September as a Senate Page.



I am always very honoured to represent the Senate at many interesting activities and events. I invite you to visit my website and to send me your comments.

Happy reading,

## Investing in post-secondary education

The human mind is the ultimate and indispensable source of prosperity, success and development of future generations. This is why all levels of government must continue to invest in post-secondary education. We must invest in key sectors, even in times of economic uncertainty, since it will pay off in the long term.

What we need now is not only sound economic management but also prudent and well-considered investments in key sectors. While I am not an economist by training, I think sound investment is an essential catalyst for productivity and that post-secondary education is one of the sectors where investment is needed.

If Canada wants to stay competitive in the global economy it must quickly implement a policy to increase productivity and encourage post-secondary education. The impact of post-secondary education extends far beyond provincial borders. The Government of Canada has played a decisive role in furthering post-secondary education in Canada. Its support must not only continue but intensify.

This leads me to a simple question: in the current economic climate, will the government be farsighted enough and have enough vision to continue investing in post-secondary education? Let us hope so.

## Exasperating situation for CBC/Radio-Canada

The Conservative government recently refused to accept the CBC/Radio-Canada's request for bridge financing, leading to the loss of 800 jobs. The public broadcaster will be forced to make \$171 million in cuts in 2009-2010.

It is unfortunate that so many talented journalists, technicians and administrative staff had to lose their job. The cuts to French-language services will amount to \$12 million, with 336 job losses in the French-language network. The French-language networks will have to absorb close to half the job losses, which does not correspond to the usual distribution of funding between the English-language and French-language networks, namely, two thirds and one third respectively.

This is very worrisome for Francophone minority communities. The cuts will have disastrous conse-

quences, reducing French-language newscasts, regional and local programming and hours of programming. By refusing to help the CBC/Radio-Canada, the government is hurting a service that is essential to support the vitality of these communities and is cutting one of the only sources of news in French. The government's decision is especially worrisome because, in some cases, the Franco-phone communities will be losing the only programming available in their language.

The CBC/Radio-Canada rallies Canadians together and provides news and typically local Canadian entertainment programming. The budget cuts will further isolate rural regions and official language minority communities. Given all that has been invested in partnerships with communities, in cultural development and Canadian broadcasting, these cuts are a real setback.

*To read my blogs, go to: [www.liberalsenateforum.ca/blog](http://www.liberalsenateforum.ca/blog) or [www.claudettetardif.ca](http://www.claudettetardif.ca).*



## Senator Tardif's questions in the Senate

### Sample questions

- Official Languages/Budget - February 5, 2009

The government did not say a word about Francophones in Budget 2009. The Commissioner of Official Languages finds it regrettable that the government chose not to reaffirm its commitment to and support for minority language communities in the 2009 budget.

*How can francophones believe that the \$1.1 million announced in the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality in June 2008 will really be included in the budget when it was not even mentioned?*

- Child Care - March 4, 2009

To encourage businesses to create child care services in the workplace, the government is offering a 25% tax credit for eligible expenses for each space created.

Yet not one space has been created by businesses. Most employers consulted in 2006 would rather work in partnership with local child care service providers, instead of creating child care spaces themselves.

*Why did the government not explore other options rather than promoting this program, which employers do not support?*

- Post-secondary Education - March 11, 2009

The Conservative government continues its disdain for science . Funding to the three national research councils has been slashed in the 2009 budget. South of the border, President Obama is providing \$25 billion for basic research in his stimulus package, whereas this government offers no funds for basic research in its stimulus package.

*Will this government commit the necessary funds to support our researchers and Canadian universities?*



See my website [www.claudettetardif.ca](http://www.claudettetardif.ca) for a complete list of questions asked in the Senate.



### “France-Canada-Québec: 400 ans de relations d’exception”

The book entitled “France-Canada-Québec : 400 ans de relations d’exception,” was officially launched in Paris, in the Senate of France. Representing the Canada-France Parliamentary Association, I congratulated the book’s coordinators, fellow Senator Serge Joyal, and Professor Paul-André Linteau. The book covers a wide range of political, historic and cultural issues pertaining to the relationship between our two countries which developed over 400 years.

This book was published in connection with the symposium entitled “L’Empreinte de la France au Canada après 400 ans,” bringing together the Canada-France Interparliamentary Association and the France-Canada interparliamentary friendship group. This symposium, which was held in two parts, in Paris in March 2008, and in Ottawa in November 2008, pertained not only to the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Quebec City but also examined the relationship between Canada and France since the exploration and colonization of North America. The meetings with our French counterparts served to strengthen our good relations with France.



Canadian Ambassador in Paris, His Excellency Marc Lortie, Vice-President of the National Assembly Marc Laffineur, Senator Claudette Tardif and Senator Marcel-Pierre Cléach, April 7, 2009.

The efforts of my many colleagues who attended these events showcased the Senate of Canada. I commend them all for their commitment to the Francophonie.

### International Women’s Day

Addressing the Annual General Meeting of the Federal Liberal Association of Ottawa-Vanier, on March 8, 2009, I highlighted the role women play in politics. The Famous Five, the women Members of Parliament, the women currently in the Senate and the women who chair committees are only a few examples that women play an important role in Canadian politics. Progress has been made on a number of issues through the contribution of women in politics. For instance, women parliamentarians supported the public’s mobilization to have abortion removed from the Criminal Code. Women must continue to play an active role in politics to work towards the betterment of society in general.

Liberal MP Mauril Bélanger spoke to constituents about the various issues he is focussing on, including the Beechwood National Cemetery, a cemetery for Canadians who died in combat and contributed to our society, to be located in the heart of the nation’s capital. The Beechwood Cemetery has now received royal assent and will be spruced up as a resting place for our heroes from across the country.



Mauril Bélanger, Liberal MP for Ottawa—Vanier, with Senator Claudette Tardif, on April 8, 2009.



## Edmonton wins first place!

Edmonton was recognized by the magazine *Corporate Knights* as a sustainable city. The winter 2009 edition included a study ranking Edmonton as the most sustainable big city in Canada. The cities were rated on the following criteria: Ecological Integrity, Economic Security, Social Well-Being, Governance and Employment, Infrastructure and Built Environment.

Edmonton rated very high for its air quality, water usage, garbage restrictions, recycling programs, low violent crime rate and high voter turnout. Over 40 festivals and events were held in 2008, more than in any other Canadian city, and the city earned the highest Economic Security score.

## Canada Youth Exchanges: Caravan Exchange 2009



On April 3, 2009, I visited with the students who took part in the Canada Youth Exchanges program organized by the Alliance Jeunesse Famille de l'Alberta Society and the *Caravane contre le racisme et la discrimination*. This intercultural exchange seeks to bring young people together and break down socio-cultural and racial barriers. Young Quebecers from the *Maison des jeunes de Pessamit* had the opportunity to learn about Francophone culture in Alberta during the week of exchange and dialogue and attended workshops on prejudice and discrimination.

## The Honourable Claudette Tardif Debate Summit



Senator Claudette Tardif with the two winning teams.

On April 3 and 4, 2009, the "Sommet de débat de l'honorable Claudette Tardif" once again featured excellent speakers from different parts of the country. Prizes were awarded to the best speaker and the two best teams.

Since 2006, Grade 10, 11 and 12 students from a number of high schools across Canada have been invited to debate a variety of subjects in French.

Congratulations to the winners, Owen Ferris and Andrea Morgan, from William Aberhart School, in Calgary, and Mathieu Sasseville and Braden McDonald, from Lycée Claudel, in Ottawa, for their skills and to all participants for their fine work.



# Groups visiting the Hill



In discussion with Carson Butts, Melanee Thomas and Emily Davidson of the Canadian Federation of Students on a number of issues relating to postsecondary education, including the recent cuts to university research (March 11, 2009).



Teachers from the *Conseil scolaire francophone Centre-Nord* of Alberta and from British Columbia who attended the Teachers' Institute, in Ottawa, February 12, 2009.



Michel Funicelli of the Mounted Police Professional Association of Canada, Roxanne McLean and Dave Thomson of the Edmonton Police Association, at my office on April 21, 2009.



My office team, including David Taylor, a former chief page of the Senate, who left after five years of fine service (April 1, 2009). From left to right: Joseph Daniel-Law, Sylvie Boulanger, David Taylor, Senator Claudette Tardif, Amanda Simard and Laure Prévost.

Students from Alberta visited my office during the Forum for Young Canadians, April 2, 2009.



Pippa Feinstein spent the day with me as part of McGill University's Women in Parliament program, March 5, 2009.



## Did you know ...

**The Liberal convention was held in Vancouver from April 30 to May 2. Liberals from across Canada met to confirm the new Leader, Michael Ignatieff.**

**The new Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada visited Edmonton on February 27, 2009. Senators Tommy Banks, Joyce Fairbairn, Grant Mitchell and I, all from the Alberta Liberal caucus, were on hand to introduce Mr. Ignatieff to Albertans, who gave him a warm welcome. Tickets were sold out to hear him speak at a Chamber of Commerce lunch and a dinner, with over 800 people in attendance.**

**The Senate Standing Committee on Official Languages is completing its report on the arts and culture in Francophone minority communities. The organizations and agencies consulted since 2007 highlighted the challenges facing official language communities, and the committee has made recommendations to continue to support the development and vitality of the arts and culture.**

**The University of Alberta has the most 3M Teaching Fellowship recipients of all universities in Canada. The University employs 28 professors who have received the award since 1986. The prestigious 3M Canada award is the highest distinction for excellence in undergraduate teaching.**

### Read two of my most recent publications:

- Linguistic Rights in Canada: a disturbing minimalism (Policy Options – January 2009)
- Senate Reform and Francophone Minorities (Parliamentary Review – Spring 2009)



### *Thought of the month*

*The purpose of a woman's life is just the same as the purpose of a man's life—That she may make the best possible contribution to the generation in which she is living.*

*-Louise McKinney, member of the "Famous Five"*

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